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ABSTRACT

In Maine and across the nation, increasing numbers of parents are choosing to educate their children at home, often illegally. The anarchistic home schooling movement springs from various motivations: religious views, pursuit of independent lifestyles, desire to spend more time with one's children, and others. Whatever their reasons, home schoolers share a deeply held belief that the existing public educational system cannot provide a healthy learning environment for their children; most want more control over their children's learning and development. Although critics and concerned public officials find two major faults with home schooling (supposed deficiencies in equivalent education and socialization), some research finds that home-schooled children are better educated and socialized than their public school counterparts. This preliminary study proposes to develop profiles of Maine home schooler parents and their children. The study is necessarily limited to parents and children who home school in compliance with state regulations. Additionally, no formal survey or profile of parents exists, because the state is withholding certain information. Despite these limitations, this paper attempts to describe the reasons why parents choose home schooling, instructional methods and materials used, evaluations used to measure student progress, parental attitudes toward home and public information, and the extent of cooperation between home schoolers and public schools. Also provided research design, and 86 footnotes. (MLH)

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A PROFILE OF FAMILIES WHO HOME SCHOOL IN MAINE

Peter Kilgore

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Peter Kilgore
54 Babbage Road
Falmouth, ME 04015

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In Maine, as in the nation at large, increasing numbers of parents are choosing to educate their children at home, often in the face of great adversity, often illegally. Who are these parents? And why do they undertake such a seemingly arduous task? Since many of them have been forced 'underground' noone knows their true numbers. John Holt, perhaps this country's preeminent home schooling advocate prior to his death in 1985, estimated their numbers at between 10,000 and 20,000 members nationwide (1981). Patricia Lines, policy analysist for the Department of Education, feels that that figure may have been accurate for the 1970's. She puts the number today at 120,000 to 260,000. Other estimates run as high as half of a million.

"The beauty of the anarchistic structure of the home schooling movement," according to Holt, "is that it spans quite comfortably a wide range of views."[1] Included are those of every ideological and political persuasion.

> In the political arena, home schools are considered to be anything from revolutionary to reactionary. They are revolutionary in that they go against the current established order. For years, myths have been perpetuated in American society that public schools provide the best instruction for the most people and it is the government's civic responsibility to educate its citizenry. As a result, professional teachers have become the primary educators of children who attend state approved schools. Home schools are a threat to that status quo.
>
> Home schools are also labeled reactionary because they developed out of a growing consensus that the public schools are not providing a healthy learning environment. Parents are distressed about the inadequate training their children are receiving and the new sexual and moral standards being promoted by schools. Lack of discipline in government schools has made it practically impossible for school administrators and students to fulfill their responsibilities. Many parents blame the expulsion of religions and traditional values for the discipline problems.[2]

The reasons motivating home schoolers are equally legion. Perhaps half of all home schoolers do so for religious reasons; others are dissatisfied with the education offered in public and private schools and feel that they can do a better job with their own children; some pursue independent life styles based in the concepts of self sufficiency; and some just want to spend more time with their children.

Whatever their reasons home schoolers seem to have in common a deeply held belief that the existing public educational system cannot providing a healthy learning/social environment for their children. They also share a need to have some say and control over their children's learning and development. And they are all willing to be different and "take a socially unorthodox route to the rearing the kind of children they want."[3]

In their home schooling they rely on prepackaged curricula of widely differing ideologies; utilize text materials from local schools; or ignore textbooks altogether and take their learning from the world around them. As academic strengths, advocates of the movement cite its flexibility, its active hands-on approach to learning, its integrated nature (as one home schooler puts it, "a deep interest in just about anything, leads just about anywhere"), and the opportunity it provides for its children to participate in the real adult world ("Life school" -meaning that learning takes place in the context of daily living and builds on what the child already knows and understands).

Critics of the movement and concerned public officials usuallly find two major faults with home schooling: 1) equivalent education-

will the child learn as much as children in the public schools? and 2) socialization - how will the home schooled child learn to get along with other kids?

Mary Anne Pitman, an associate professor in educational anthropology at the University of Cincinnati, who has been studying home schooling states, "From what I've seen so far, these children are learning better than their counterparts in school, and they are in no way being damaged by the experience."[4] As to the question of socialization, one home schooler from Maine replies. "Home schooling allows our children to cope with society in general, not just their own peers in a controlled environment. It's real-life socialization rather than an institutionalized program."[5]

Although all states in the union now allow home schooling in some form, the requirements vary widely. Some states have very liberal laws while others arrest and jail parents for the alleged crime of educating their own children at home or sending them to an unapproved religious or private school. John Holt, for one, advocated model legislation aimed at the removal of all major obstacles to full cooperation between schools and home school families. Nanette Barrett is another. In her introduction to the Home Education Act in The Education Source Book: The Legislators' Guide for Reform she states:

> One of the root causes for many educational failures is the serious deterioration of the American family. Home schools respond to this providing an opportunity for the family's rejuvenation. School and government officials would be wise not merely to refrain from opposing home schoolers, but to cooperate with them as fully as possible. Such cooperation is likely to yield important ideas and methods that might help public institutions solve their most serious problems.[6]

At any rate, legal or illegal, with or without the support of public officials, home schooling in America continues to flourish.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this study are 1) to develop a profile of parents in Maine who are currently educating their children at home and 2) to develop a profile of students currently being home schooled in Maine. The only serious limitation to this study is that of necessity it needs to be limited to those parents and students who home school in compliance with state regulations. It is estimated that an equal number of parents and children home school without state knowledge or approval. But access to this group is limited by their 'underground' status.

In addition to basic demographic facts, this study proposes to describe the reasons why parents choose to home school; methods and materials used in instruction; types of evaluations used to measure progress; parental attitudes toward home and public information; degree and extent of cooperation between home schoolers and public schools; and other areas typically associated with the home schooling movement.

If Maine follows national trends, the typical (mythic) home schooling parent is probably a mother in an intact family[7] of medium size (average of 3.3 children)[8] who has received a better than average education[9] and is deeply concerned with the welfare of her children.[10] More than likely she and her family live in a rural area.[11] Although generalizations about socio-economic and political backgrounds cannot be made (Divoky; Barrett), there is probably a better than average chance that religion plays an important part in her decision to home school.[12]

While some speculation about the make-up of home schooling parents can be made based on existing literature, there is little that can be ventured about the make-up of the typical home schooled child. Coverage in the literature has typically been reserved for the atypical child or the atypical environment, that is, the gifted child, for example, or children of families caught up in an appeals process. To the extent that Maine follows the national trends, the typical (mythic) home schooled child is as likely to be male as female;[13] has probably received some public education;[14] is more likely of elementary school age than secondary school age;[15] and tends to score higher on achievement tests than do his/her public school peers.[16]

In light of the continuing growth of the home schooling movement in Maine, information gleaned from this study will prove useful to several groups of people including: 1) state and local educational officials who will receive increasing numbers of requests to home school in the future; 2) local educational administrators and school board members who, by knowing their home school populations better, will be moved to greater understanding and acceptance. Hopefully this knowledge will lead to greater cooperation in the future, possibly helping to bring those home educators forced underground back into the open; 3) parents interested in the movement who will find helpful information, support, and encouragement in the reading of this study; 4) teachers in public and private education who will benefit from what John Holt referred to as "the laboratory for the intensive study of children's learning and of ways in which friendly and concerned adults can help them learn".[17] 5) local curriculum committees who may wish to use the information

critical of public education to modify their public offerings; 6) researchers who wish to study the home education movement in more detail, including such aspects as parental roles in education, or the effects of the home environment on learning; 7) legislators and other policy makers who are concerned about future educational reforms; and, lastly 7) anyone interested in the nature of learning in general.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of Literature

International Perspective

Historically, home education has been the rule rather than the exception. It has only been in the past 150 years or so that mandatory and universal public education has become a significant factor. With the increased centralization and growth of our society we have come to expect our children to be educated in government supported schools readily accessible to the general public. Yet, in the world today there are countries that reflect our beginnings in trying to educate their citizenry, many of whom live in remote areas without the advantages of established school systems. Countries like Australia in its more remote provinces of New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territories have instituted innovative methods of distance education nearly always under the supervision of a student's mother.[18] In England, where private education has long enjoyed public acceptance, the home schooling movement flourishes helped by such national organizations as Education Otherwise.[19]

In our own country, Alaska has established an innovative correspondence program to reach that part of its population that is either transient or distantly remote from existing school areas.[20] Originally established in 1939 as a distance education project, the Centralized Correspondence Study Program was so successful that in 1976 it was opened to any families in the state who wanted to use its services.

Long considered an essential ingredient in our society, public education has recently fallen into disfavor with increasing numbers

of people. Such dissatisfaction has led not only to the unprecedented growth of home schooling in America, but also to an alarming increase in the number of existing private schools.[21] In response to these two movements, government agencies are being forced to reevaluate their current policies and plan for the future.[22]

National Perspective

The number of alternatives to public education has increased significantly in the past five years as disaffected parents choose either to home school their children or send them to private schools. For instance, Barrett reports that in Louisiana alone "300 new private and Christian schools have opened and 600 families have begun home study programs since the passage of a law in 1980 to deregulate private education."[23] Although states use a variety of legal requirements to regulate private education,[24] compulsory education laws typically are the primary tool used.[25] Recent court cases have frequently found these laws to be vague.[26] At the same time, courts have generally upheld the rights of parents to educate their children at home providing that the parents adhere to the prevailing concept of 'equivalent education'.[27] Rather than believing that parents operate in a vacuum, courts continue to view the education of its citizens as a 'shared responsibility' between parents and states.[28]

In spite of the increased legal support given by courts to home schooling, the movement continues to be an unpopular option in the eyes of the general public. A Gallup Poll recently found that sixty-five percent of responents felt that parents should not have the right to teach their children at home.[29] However, younger adults

under 30 years of age, were more likely to feel that home schooling should be permitted. This same tendency was also apparent among parents who were dissatisfied with existing public education systems.

Among critics of public education in this country, two stand out in the literature as people who have become highly influential in the home schooling movement: John Holt, author of Teach Your Own: a Hopeful Path for Education and founder of the movements national clearinghouse and publication center,"Growing Without Schools"; and Raymond Moore, author, lecturer, and founder of the Hewitt Research Foundation in Washougel, Washington. Both men believe that the home is the best educational placement after all is said and done, and that parents are the best teachers.

In the face of continued conflict between public and private interests, the time seems ripe for educational reforms such as the establishment of minimal compulsory education laws coupled with maximum educational alternatives[30] or the establishment of innovative legislations such as the model Home Schooling Act advocated by Barrett.[31] Such approaches allow parents the right to exercise their freedom to educate their children at home without the severe or undue restrictions currently imposed by many states in our country. Lines further argues that the evidence seems to support the idea that the primary efforts of enforcement currently being concentrated on children who are being educated at home or in private schools (even if they are unapproved), would be better spent in finding and working with the true truants in our society who have taken to the streets in increasing numbers.[32]

Daily Operations of Home Schools

Two studies of the daily operations of home schools were found. In the first[33] three questions were presented: 1) Why do home schoolers choose to educate their children at home? 2) How do they conduct their home schools? and 3) What are major concerns that home schoolers have with their approach to education?

Through informal descriptions of previously published reports (such as "Gr ing without Schools") and through case studies of families at various stages in the home schooling process, the authors generate hypotheses concerning the movement.

Answers offered to the first question are: unsuitability of the child for public school; parents desire for control; socialization issues (such as family oriented value system as opposed to peer-dependent value system); conceptualizations concerning the learning process; ideas abaout public cshool content; and personal interest. Answers to question two were presented through extensive use of observational field notes while answers to question three include: fear, self-doubt, exhaustion, social isolation, structure versus spontaneity, measures of progress, roles of other family members, materials, independence, undesirable behaviors , and apparent lack of progress.

In a second study,[34] the same authors attempted to generate hypotheses regarding the premises, daily practices, and procedures employed by home schooling families. Through the extensive use of naturalistic descriptions and analyses of three home school families, 4 hypotheses were generated: 1) home schools provide a rich social experience for children, allowing for a high degree of social development; 2) high achievement levels may be obtained by children

because of the large amount of one-to-one tutoring, excellent parent support, favorable environment, and highly effective study materials; 3) a time mix between structured and unstructured learning activities allows for greater personal involvement of children in their education and potentially higher achievement; and 4) given the high degree of commitment needed by parents to educate their children at home, it was hypothesized that parents with moderate to low levels of commitment will probably not be successful unless their degree of commitment increases.

Further insights and descriptions of home study schools can be elicited from questionnaires and surveys included in the distance education project (Taylor & Tomlison) and the Alaskan CCS program (Green). In addition, some of the philosophical considerations and practical implications of educating gifted children at home are presented by Kearney in an interview with two families who have chosen to educate their parents at home.[35]

HOME SCHOOLING IN MAINE

Home Schooling in Maine

Legal Aspects: Part I

Like most other states in the Union, Maine derives its legal jusirdiction over home schooling through its compulsory education laws which extend back to the 1800's. In Maine, home schooling is implicitly allowed through phrases such as that found in the 1954 Compulsory Education Law, C41§92, ". . . such attendance [compulsory] shall not be required if the child obtains equivalent instruction for a like period of time, in a private school . . . or in any other manner arranged for by the superintending school committee with the approval of the Commissioner." Such legislation continued until 1979 C449 s3 par. B when an appeals process was instituted to extend parental rights in the matters of equivalent instruction: "If any request to be excused is denied by a local school committee or board of directors, an appeal may be filed with the Commissioner. The Commissioner shall review the request to be excused and determine whether the local school committee or board of directors has been correct in its finding that no equivalent instruction is available. If the Commissioner finds that equivalent instruction is available to the child, he shall approve the request to be excused."

On November 14, 1979, shortly after the 1979 law became effective, State Commissioner of Education Harold Reynolds, Jr. notified the State Board of Education of the pending review and update of the "Procedures and Standards for Basic Approval of Schools: Private and Public: Grades K-12 and Schools for Exceptional Children". Noting that "Guidelines for home study have been non-existent to this point", Wallace LaFountain, consultant, State Department of Education, Curriculum Division, wrote to the board that guidelines "are being

drawn up at this time to meet a sharply increased demand, by parents, to allow parents to teach their children at home."[36] At its November meeting in Washington County the State Board approved the "Basic School Approval Standards" but tabled the "Guidelines for the Conduct of Home Instruction Programs" after an initial reading.[37] In February of 1980 "after having undergone substantial change [they] were tentatively approved at the State Board meeting at the Augusta Civic Center and had ~~the~~ their required public hearing in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (APA)"[38] The "Guidelines for Home Instruction" were formally approved in May of 1980 after a "year in preparation, rewrites, and public hearings".[39]

These guidelines, established with the extensive help of home schoolers Maria Holt and Betsy King, presented three options by which parents could meet Home Instruction program requirements: 1) program under the supervision of a qualified person; 2) use of an approved correspondence program under the supervision of a qualified person; and 3) use of a program of any design agreed upon by the family and the local educational agency (LEA). It was further stated that, in agreement with the 1979 law, that if agreement could not be reached on the local level, appeal could be made to the Commissioner who, if he found that the proposal provided for equivalent instruction, would override the LEA and approve the proposal.

LegalAspects: Part II

Prior to 1984 most home schooling requests were handled on a case-by-case basis by the local school districts. However, at the urging of school superintendents who complained that the state

regulations were too vague, leaving them open to legal action, the Department of Education and Cultural Services (DECS) drew up more detailed procedures, clarifying the concept of equivalent education. These guidelines were part of the Education Reform Act of 1984. The problem was that the Department had committed a "classic management error"[40] in not involving home schoolers in the process. Instead,the DECS chose to work with the Maine School Superintendent's Association, "a group home schoolers view with considerable suspicion because of the hostility many parents have experienced from local superintendents."[41] Together, these two groups, DECS and MSSA, developed a 21 page proposal to replace the 2 page proposal developed in 1980, a move hailed by Maria Holt, generally regarded as Maine's pioneer home schooler and the person generally credited with the development of the 1980 guidelines, as "chasing butterflies with sledgehammers"[42] and by Dr. Raymond Moore, founder of the Hewitt Research Foundation, as "trying to design a 20-ton truck to do the work of a pick up".[43]

At the APA hearing held in Augusta on June 13, 1984 to recieve public comment on the proposal, more than 200 people jammed the hearing room. As Steve Moitozo, a business owner and home educator from Auburn, put it "If you don't know the people you're writing regulations for, if you don't include them in the process, you're shaking a bee hive and the result is what you have now - a room full of angry bees." "Physicians, attorneys, practicing home schoolers, and professional educators testified in opposition to the proposed rules as written . . . In addition, home school specialists were in attendance from Vermont, New Hampshire, and the State of Washington."[44] The hearing consummed over three hours with 32

speakers presenting their comments. Written testimony was received at the time of the hearing and for 10 additional days afterward.[45] Perhaps the most significant theme running through the meeting was that the proposed changes should never have been developed without the help of home schoolers.

Although the state was in no way legally bound to act on testimony recieved at the hearing, Commissioner of Education Boose immediately called for the formation of an ad hoc committee consisting of 4 school superintendents, 4 home schoolers and department staff . This committee was charged with finding the middle ground between the state's compelling interest in the education of its youth and the parents rights about that education.

By September 13, 1984 the committee had drawn up and the State Board of Education had approved the list of regulations currently in effect, "Guidelines for Equivalent Instruction through Home Schooling". Steve Moitozo, home schooling member of the committee, said that as a result of the new rules "the power's back where it belongs, back with the people."[46] Where the original proposal required home schooling parents to either have a teaching certificate or offer proof of their ability to teach, the new proposals state that a parent could either possess a teaching certificate or offer proof of a satisfactory support system which could consist of either a certified teacher, a public or private school, or another approved home schooling parent. The newly adopted regulations require an instructional day of sufficient length to accomplish the educational goals in place of the rigid 5 hours a day, 5 days a week, 180 days a year recommended in the original proposal. In addition, a state level advisory board, consisting of three home

schoolers, 1 DECS member, and 1 public school administrator, was set up to review parental appeals at the state level and make recommendations to the Commissioner on their findings.

Katheryn Kearney, home school advocate and committee member, praised the move as "making Maine the only state in the Union to place practicing home schoolers on a state wide advisory board."[47]

Education Commissioner Boose said he felt that the regulations would prove "stringent enough to guarantee quality education, and flexible enough to let parents take the lead in educating their children."[48] A key goal, according to Boose "was to make consistent the standards by which individual home school programs are judged by the local educators who must approve them."[49] To accomplish this goal, the law required the school boards of every school administrative unit in the state to adopt rules governing the application for and the review of equivalent instruction programs as alternatives to attendance in the regular public day school program. No small task. Such action was stipulated by the law in 1980 but by January, 1982 only Greenville had adopted its own set of rules.[50] Resistance and misunderstanding were immediately apparent as evidenced by the following two examples. The Augusta Board of Education, fearing an attempt by the state to dump the Christian school issue on local school boards, voted against having the new rules even read at its meeting in September of 1985.[51] Later, in the same year, the Old Town School Board, stating their disapproval of home schooling in general, denied requests from 6 families to educate their children at home. Three of those decisions were overturned by the Commissioner of Education with the probability of the other three being overturned upon appeal.[52]

Unfortunately, too often, even today, such antagonism continues to exist, serving only to further alienate home schoolers. As Lines points out, "where restrictive requirements exist, parents often go underground, that is, they operate in violation of the law. . . . Restrictive laws do not eliminate home instruction. They simply change where and how it's done."[53]

Numbers of Students Enrolled in Home Study Programs

The concept of home schooling is not new to the State of Maine. As Wallace LaFountain points out, "We've always had a few families in Maine doing this, mainly because of geographic remoteness or transportation problems."[54] What is new, however, is the increasing number of parents in the state who are choosing to try home education programs for their children. As can be seen from the following chart, the numbers have been increasing significantly over the past 5 years.

Number of Home Study Programs in Maine[55]

Year:	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-85	86-87
Number of Programs:	4	10	15	121	217	210*

*program figures as of October 27, 1986

The extent to which these figures accurately reflect the actual number of home schooling programs is subject to debate. One must remember that these figures only reflect those programs 'officially approved' by the state and filed with the State Department of Education. LaFountain is quoted in 1983 as being quite certain that some parents are conducting 'underground' home schooling programs. In a recent telephone conversation (12/86) he suggested that the number of 'underground' programs is

probably equal to the number of approved progams. Such speculation is supported in such diverse publications as the Maine Times and the home schoolers' national publication Growing without Schooling. A second limitation to the credibility of the state figures concerns the extent to which the state was able to maintain its records in the face of such unexpected growth in the home schooling movement. An article in the Portland Press Herald (2/9/85) begins by stating that "the state doesn't have exact figure but DECS consultant, Wallace LaFountain, estimates about 40 families with 60 children are conducting schools in homes in Maine." Two months later, LaFountain is quoted in the Lewiston Daily Sun (4/22/85), "We thought the number had levelled off last year (1984) at 60, and that's how many we thought there were this year until we decided to count them. . . and to our amazement there were 130 children now [April 1985] being educated at home."

While the accuracy of the state's figures may be in question (for example, ad hoc home education minutes for the Fall of 86 state that "records show programs as early as 1982-83" but LaFountain and the literature show several cases before that time) what is beyond question is the rapid growth of the movement in Maine. Bruce Young of DECS, one of two consultants in the State Department of Education who share responsibilities in the home schooling area, predicts continued growth culminating in the possible establishment of a permanent, full time state level position dealing exclusively with home schooling matters and issues. (Personal communication 12/86).

Katheryn Kearney, home schooling teacher, advocate, and committee member, sees "this particular movement growing faster than

anyone realizes".[56] In contrast, Gorham School Superintendent Constance Goldman says that she doesn't see a 'groundswell' for home schooling. Rather, she attributes its current popularity to "trends in the 60's and 70's that emphasized individual liberties. Many parents will try it and find it much more difficult than they thought".[57]

Geographical Distribution

As to the geographical distribution of families in the state LaFountain, in 1980, stated that most of the requests coming into his office [one or two requests a week] came from rural areas of the state.[58a] By 1986 LaFountain had noticed a sudden influx of home schooling families in the Southern part of the state (more urban area). He attributed this growth spurt to families who moved into Maine from Massachusetts where they had been involved in the home schooling movement.[58b] Even though the state has all this information on file, it is currently difficult to obtain because they (DECS) are currently awaiting a ruling from the Assistant Attorney General concerning "public right to know" and privacy and confidentiality issues. On February 9, 1985 the Portland Evening Express printed a survey of home schooling parents in the Greater Portland area. Of the 24 students schooled at home in the area: 9 lived in Gorham; 9 lived in SAD 6 (Hollis, Standish, Limington, and Buxton); 3 lived in SAD 15 (Gray and New Gloucester); 2 lived in South Portland; and 1 lived in Portland. Such findings reflect LaFountains observations on the prevalance of rural families involved in the movement even in a predominantly urbanized area. The article further stated that, according to school officials, there were no home schoolers in Falmouth, Scarborough, Yarmouth, Cumberland, North

Yarmouth, Pownal, Windham, Raymond, Westbrook, or Freeport. Again, the accuracy of local school officials responses is questionable since the author of this report who lives in Falmouth has been 'officially' home schooling his step-son since 1984 and knows of at least one family in Windham who was home schooling at the time of this report.

Parents Who Home School in Maine

No formal survey or profile of parents who choose to educate their children at home in Maine seems to exist. Potentially helpful information on file with the state is being withheld. If the unprecedented turnout at the APA hearing in Augusta , however, is any indication, then they are indeed a varied lot. "Farmers, doctors, lawywers, housekeepers and business leaders, former teachers, and at least one person studying for a master's degree in education turned out for the session - all representing Maine families who educate their own children. "[59] Katheryn Kearney, advisor to home schooling families in Maine and Vermont, says that the group, "runs the gamut . . . This is the most diverse group of people I've ever met and when they get together for home support meetings you will find every kind of religious denomination and philosophy you can imagine. You will find people who are very liberal and very conservative and everything in between."[60] The Maine Times concurs (6/11/82):

> Those on the outside tend to identify home schooling as a rejection of organized education by a small group of elitists. Those on the inside say just the opposite, that it is an acceptance of their responsibility as parents and that, far from being elitist, they run the full gamut of society, from well educated liberals to dedicated conservatives, from conventional middle-class, 2-parent homes to single mothers who work nights so they can be home with their children during the day.

Why Parents Home School

In its simplest expression, the reasons that parents choose to home school their children range from geography to religion, geography probably being the original reason and religion being the most recent. Between these two extremes lie a range of other reasons such as the following list gleaned from a review of newspaper reports relating to education (1980-1986) housed at the State Law Library in Augusta. The first group of reasons are concerned with seemingly unalterable physical realities.

1) Geographical remoteness or transportation problems: LaFountain recalls instances when parents engaged in traditional Maine occupations such as operators of fire towers, warden stations, or custom gates on the Canadian border ofter opted for home instruction. Some local agencies have provided airplane services to remote areas to bring children to school. A newer viable option for parents and school systems might be the home schooling choice.

2) Handicapped Child: Although Maine has an act assuring the education of all its handicapped children, there may be instances where parents may prefer to home school their children rather than put up with the difficulties of day-to-day attendance in public school. For example, one pair of parents removed their son from private school because severe allergies had caused him to miss 40 days of school and they felt that under the circumstances he could be better educated at home.[61]

3) Convenience: Occasionally business interests force whole families to be on the move periodically throughout the year. Such families find it nearly impossible to adjust to a public school schedule.[62a] Other potential home schoolers in this category may be missionaries, itinerant farm workers, people who work the

county fair circuit, and military employees. More than one sailing family has also chosen to go on extended forrays into the world. Home schooling has been a viable option for all of these people.

A second group of reasons are concerned with the political, philosophical, and religious convictions of parents:

4) Self-sufficiency: Responding to a question in 1980 concerning the increasing requests about home education, LaFountain said that he felt that most came from people who have made an attempt to return to a more self-suffient way of life.[62] LaFountain went on to point out that "the United States was founded by people who originally were self-sufficient, did their own farming, and made their own clothes. There came a time when they decided to hire a schoolmaster to take care of the teaching duties they had been doing themselves. The one-room school house gave way to the elementary,grammar, and high schools of today. Perhaps it's a longing to return to these basic ideals that has spawned this new interest."[63]

5) Political Considerations: Some parents approach home schooling from an anti-bureaucratic, individualized standpoint. LaFountain again: "In many cases people who were young radicals in the 60's are now parents but have keptanti-establishment attitudes. . . they want to nurture to infuse as much of themselves as they can into their children."[64] On the other hand, William Cutter, home schooler from Auburn, challenges this popular notion that home educators are philosophically similar to the free-school supporters of the mid-seventies and the anti-war marchers of the late sixties. "Most people seem to feel home schoolers are very liberal . . . But we're actually very Republican, conservative even. It's actually a very conservative thing to do; we don't want the state telling

us how to educate our children."[65]

6) Religious Conviction: Along with reactions toward public schools, religion (or mare specifically, lack of religion in public schools) is the most frequently cited reason suggested by parents seeking permission to educate their children at home. To the extent that Maine reflects the nation at large, perhaps as many as half of Maine's home schoolers may do so for religious reasons. Both Kearney and LaFountain cite home schooling parents "who are fundamentalist Christians who want religious value intertwined with the everyday education of their children."[66] LaFountain finds a direct connection between the rising numbers of home educators and the rapid evolvement of Christian schools in Maine.[67] In several instances parents withdrew their children from Christian schools because of high tuition fees and subsequently established home schooling programs for them because they were determined to keep religious values in the education of their children.[68]

The finalgroup of reasons are concerned with parental attitudes toward public and private education.

7) Reaction to Public Education: Reactions to public and private education vary widely among home schoolers. Jeremy Farmer of Gorham typifies one extreme of the movement,those parents who prefer home education to pulic or private education: "We're looking for a more personalized, individualized education than the school system can offer."[69] At the other extreme are a solid core of home educators who find public school so objectionable they would do almost anything to keep their kids from it. Members of this group are likely to be followers of John Holt. Maria Holt (no

relation) represents the feelings of this group when she states that "for maybe a third of the children [public education] is a horror scene. . . schools ahve to present a fairly uniform day to children and that uniform day does not meet the needs of some children."[70]

A number of parents object that peer pressure is too great in public school. Dr. Raymond Moore, in an interview prior to his testifying as an expert witness at the 1984 APA hearing in Augusta, stated that research shows that children in public schools "actually become asocial". He said they become peer dependent, meaning that they turn away from their home values and rely on their peers for values. To the extent that this happens, a child, according to Moore, "looses his sense of self-worth, his optimism, his respect for parents, and finally trust in his peers."Home schooled children do well, according to Moore, because they develop a sense of self-worth, something that happens best when they are working with their parents.[71] Pamela Farmer of Gorham reflects this position when she says, "We feel we would like [our daughter's] values to come from the family and not from her peers."[72]

Kathi Kearney also recognizes another group of home schoolers who "just want to be more involved with their children, including their education."[73] These parents are neither willing nor able to turn the education of their children over to the government.

In general, the motives of parents presented in this section have one thing in common: that is, they all think that they can do as good a job, or a better job of educating their children than the public school system, while offering them experiences and values generally not present in public schools.

The final reason parents cite for choosing home schooling comes from the movement itself.

8). Increased Visibility of Home Schooling: LaFountain, for one, speculates that the increased visibility of home education has encouraged more parents to try it. "The process of home instruction is becoming better known, with guidelines and publicity. Before parents might have had an inclination to do this, but they didn't know how to go about it."[74] Through provisions spelled out in the guidelines parents teaching their children have become a ready source of help for parents interested in the program. Support groups and newsletters have sprung up around the state. All these actions have kept the movement in the public's eye.

Whatever the reasons, and they seem legion, this pursuit is still only an exercise in speculation since state guidelines, much to the chagrin of local educational officials, do not require home schoolers to state their reasons for choosing to do so.

Approaches to Home Schooling

The ways that parents choose to school their children at home range from the extensive use of the Bible[75] to the actual establishment of a private school. Among the latter is the remarkable Maria Holt. At a time (1970) when the state had no provisions for home education, Holt applied for her teaching certificate and, with the help of Betty King, established her own school. Although public officials were initially enraged, over the years relations improved to the extent that other school districts would tuition students to her. The school was dissolved in 1980 with the graduation of the Holt's fifth child. Three of her children attended college where they regularly made the dean's list.[76] Helen Brooks of Robbinston

also created her own school but with different results. "I started an alternative school in 1970 for my 8 children. The town saw red. I spent the next 10 years fighting the local school board plus the state department in Augusta. In 1979-80, things got pretty bad. The state department just took away the school approval."[77]

Needless to say, most parents do not go to the extreme of establishing their own home schools, although as the two examples just cited show, it was a viable alternative for parents over the years. However, all parents are required under law to provide an equivalent instruction, and they do this in a variety of interesting and innovative ways. Under the 1980 Guideleines, option 2, parents were allowed to use correspondence course materials. Many parents still choose this route, using materials such as the Calvert Home School Curricula, or the offerings of the American Christian Academy or the Home Instruction institute. Yhe 1984 Guidelines stipulated that courses like English, Language Arts, American History, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science and Physical Education had to be taught. These subjects could be presented in almost any format, using materials chosen by the teacher (who was probably the parent) but presented in an ordered sequential curriculum.[78] The Guidelines further stated that the parent could use public or private schools or certified teachers. In many instances, local school systems responded by providing textbooks and guidance for instruction. Not all school systems were cooperative, however. Occasionally, public school systems closed their facilities to parents and children who choose the home schooling option.

In many instances, parents provide materials based entirely on their child's individual development. For example, in Auburn, a

third grader's interests runs to "Charles Dickens and learning Latin rather than common subjects in the Auburn elementary schools;"[79] an eighth grader in Falmouth is in his third year of studying Latin, Algebra, and other courses usually reserved for high school students; and an extemely bright Farmington sixth grader whose parents at that time (19801) taught him Shakespeare, geometry and foreign languages.[80] Although such examples are probably the exception rather than the rule, they should point out the fact that public schools frequently are not flexible enoughto meet the needs of all of its students whose true learning capacities are seldom tapped.

Parents in the home schooling movement often forsake the more traditional bookish, passive materials for more active, involving pursuits. Parents frequently use community resources other than public schools. Libraries, museums, historic sites, local and state houses of legislature often find their way into home schooling curricula. Such an approach resembles the 'field trip' aspects of public education but are extremely more frequent, more leisurely, and ultimately more satisfying. Home schooling parents have involved their children in music lessons, privately tutored classes, "open-admissions college programs, local free-school activities or experimental schools on college campuses. Others have involved their children in Boy Scouts, 4-H clubs, dance and recreation programs as well as other activities to insure that their children experience variety, growth,and socialization. In general, for many of these oarents and children, the community becomes the primary teaching resource.

Summary

In the past five years the home schooling movement has undergone tremendous growth in the State of Maine. In that time, two separate sets of guidelines have been mandated, developed, and implemented; local administrative units have twice been told to develop local home schooling rules; the Department of Education and Cultural Services have begun to work together; the home schooling movement has gained respect and authority by assuming important advisory positions; support groups and newsletters have helped make the movement more visible; and increasing numbers of parents for a variety of reasons are declaring themselves in favor of home schooling.

Over the years the state has become increasingly conscientious about the rights of home schoolers, especially since the 1984 APA hearings in Augusta which seems to have served as the catalyst that led to the reconciliation of parental and state interests in the education of children through equivalent instruction. In fact, of the 212 proposals to reach the state for approval this year, 210 have been approved. One can only hope that local educational units throughout the state will follow suit and cease to be so antagonistic to such a typically American movement.

Those people who have been around the movement the longest, seem to have the the most sessible outlooks. Kathi Kearney, for instance. views the home schooling movement as "a healthy movement because of the diversity it provides in society. . . I think we need all these options in a democratic society."[81]

Maria Holt, pioneer in Maine's home schooling movement,

feels that "Home education simply enriches the public school curriculum. It is an alternative for those who want to use it."[82]

Perhaps an editorial from the Bangor Daily News 99/24/85) best summarizes the whole situation;

> Reasonable people may disagree over the best ways to educate children. That is why there is such a wide array of public and private school options and teaching techniques. Home schooling is one of those options, which a small group of conscientious, dedicated parents has struggled to have legitimized (even thought it is hardly new or disreputable). While many people may disagree with these parents, society should continue to respect their opinions until there is some evidence that home education has a detrimental effect on children.

PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN

Proposed Research Design

Statement of Purpose

This project will establish two profiles: 1) a profile of parents currently home schooling their children at home in Maine; and 2) a profile of children currently being home schooled in Maine.

Population

The population being surveyed to obtain these two profiles is the total number of programs currently on file with the State Department of Education and Cultural Services. This list consists of all the approved home study programs, which as of October 27, 1986 totalled 210 programs.

Instruments

This study calls for the investigation of two separate bodies of information: 1) records of approved home schooling programs currently on file, including application form and intended curriculum for each program; and 2) Investigation of the results of a pair of questionnaires - one each received from a.) parents in the population and b.) children in the population.

Methods

In the first phase, records currently on file with DECS will be carefully surveyed to find basic demographic information. Information gained from these records will include such things as: child's name, age, current school and grade; parent's name,address,

educational background, teaching experience, and other relevant information; program description, including texts, materials, and other resources available to child, and a sample weekly schedule. Also included are: a description of a preferred evaluation process; selection of an annual assessment process; and a description of the selected support system.

In the second phase, separate questionnaires will be prepared and mailed out to parents and children in the study population.

In the third phase, information from the review of records and information from returned questionnaires will be collated, analyses and reported.

Procedures

The procedures necessary to complete the proposed research design fall into 4 basic stages.

Stage 1: Stage 1 activities are clustered around the review of existing records of the study population on file with DECS. Since access to this information is very difficult owing to an awaited ruling by the State's Attorney General on confidentiality issues versus the public's right to know laws, a petition would be made to the Curriculum Director of DECS. This petition would seek permission to approach the files as a researcher interested in profiling parents and children in the home schooling movement in Maine. As such, provisions of confidentiality could be better assured, perhaps through masking of names or some other process.

An instrument for guiding the review and recording the results would have to be developed, as would a consistant procedure for the

for the collection and analysis of file data. And, lastly, a mailing list would be developed using names and addresses from the filed information.

Stage 2: Stage 2 is concerned with the development of the questionnaires. In researching this study 4 sources of questionnaires pertinent to the study were found. Sue Greene presents a profile of the "typical CC/S Student" through use of a three page parental "inquiry" and an additional one page students inquiry whereby she establishes pertinent demographic data, reasons for choosing to enroll, methods and materials utilized, elicitation of difficulties and advantages of home schooling, and use of support systems.[83] Greene's report also includes a cover letter and good discussions about surveying techniques and problems. Becky Rupp reports the findings of a mailed survey to 100 selected home schoolers across the country.[84] Although the response (43 out of 100) was small, the questions were interesting demographically and otherwise, for instance a listing of occupations of responding home schoolers. Katheryn Kearney also suggests some pertinent questions in her interview with two home schooling families of gifted children in Maine.[85] And finally, "The Survey of Home Schooling Families Relative to Proposed Changes in Legislation in Washington State,"[86] described in Growing without Schools as "perhaps the best portrait of home schoolers available." This report not only provides the survey, its background, and results but also includes a good discussion on limitations of populations, field testing of questionnaires, and extensive information, primarily through example, of presentation of findings.

After surveying this literature, questionnaires will be developed and reviewed with appropriate personnel, such as the Assistant Attorney General assigned to the State Department of Education and Cultural Services subsequent to be field tested. If necessary, modifications should be made in the test based on the field tests. At the conclusion of Stage 2 effective questionnaires should be in place.

Stage 3: The activities of Stage 3 are concerned with the actual distribution of the questionnaires. A cover letter should be composed explaining to parents the nature of the study and encouraging participation. Following the mailing list generated during the review of records in Stage 1, questionnaires are mailed out to the parents and children in the study population, along with the cover letter, time restraints, and a means of return postage. After these pieces are in the mail, the process of follow-up mailings and/or interviews should be established to try to reach those who don't respond within the guidelines or time restraints of the study. Upon expiration of the time limits, these methods should be implemented.

Stage 4: Stage 4 activities are concerned with collecting and collating of data, analyzing data, and publishing results. Some guidelines need to be developed for each stage of this process. For example, what, if any, are deemed unacceptable responses to questionnaire items? What is the most efficient way of organizing the results? And finally what is the most efficient way of presenting the results.

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes

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